Design Resource

Bhavm Mural Arts

Bamboo Artwork Unit

by
Nikhil Kunnath
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
https://www.dsource.in/resource/bhavm-mural-arts

1. About Uravu
2. History of Uravu
3. Location
4. The Nursery
5. Bhavm - The Story
6. Tools Used
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About Uravu

Uravu is a nonprofit trust formed in 1996 with the sole intention of promoting bamboo and creating awareness among the people about the material, Uravu began its journey by cultivating bamboo shoots and supplying them to the farmers in the community. Bamboo craft is another domain that they had right from the beginning. Uravu aims to provide employment to the margin alized sectors of the community through bamboo craft.

Uravu sets up various units under it for the production of various craft products. Some of these units are the jute bag unit, basket weaving unit, Mural painting unit, achaar(pickle) unit, stationary products unit etc. Whenever they see an opportunity where they can involve the people of the village to make a product from bamboo which would benefit the community for their livelihood, they organize a small gathering with the community and spread their ideas. If the people are willing to make the products, they form a unit and provide training to a selected number of people for the production of the craft item in batches.

Bhavm is one such unit that dedicates itself to creating marvellous artworks over bamboo and certain other materials like terracotta, clay, wood and canvas. They create a mural painting of idols of Indian mythology. The unit was started by two artists, Sujith and Miss Deepa who reside in kalpetta. The paintings they do are inspired by the Kerala temple paintings and are mostly depicting idols of Hindu mythology.

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History of Uravu

Uravu has a very inspiring story behind its setup. I had a conversation with Mr. Baburaj, the President of Uravu Trust. I call him Babuettan with respect (ettan meaning brother). He speaks about the worst times Thrikkaipetta had faced in the past. Babuetten was born and brought up in Thrikkaipetta. He knows his village and its people. In the olden days, women were unemployed.

It was customary during those days that the male member is the earning member of the family and the females had to take care of the house and do all the household work. After marriage, the women had no other job than to sit in the house. They did not earn for the family. Babuettan along with a few others believed that women could do better than that and they could also earn their livelihood. Hence Uravu started with the intention of providing employment to women belonging to the scheduled tribe community in the village. He also talks about the importance of the material bamboo and refers it to as 'poor man's timber'. The British when they came to India referred to bamboo as the concrete of India. He explains that bamboo has been used by our people from a very early period and has become a part of our culture. People had their shelter made from bamboo in his village during his childhood. He also talks about the darker times Thrikkaipetta had faced when they had a famine that he never wanted to happen again. Uravu was hence set up with great intentions and worked towards the betterment of the community.

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Location

Uravu is located in the village named Thrikkaipetta, 10km away from the nearest township named Kalpetta in the Wayanad district of Kerala. The only mean through which one can reach Wayanad is through the road and also by air if you are rich enough to hire a private helicopter. There are bus services, both private and state transport departments at every 45 minutes interval to Kalpetta from Kozhikode/ Calicut the nearest district to Wayanad. The journey takes 3 hours to the max.

For anyone from outside Kerala, the quickest way to reach Uravu is to take a bus from Kozhikode to Kalpetta and a second bus from Kalpetta to Thrikkaipetta. There are also bus services from Bangalore towards Wayanad which takes around a night's journey. The journey is very beautiful and scenic once you enter Wayanad.

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The Nursery

Uravu has a bamboo nursery where people are engaged in growing bamboo shoots. They have an interesting way of getting their resources through the farmers in the community. Uravu takes the responsibility of providing the farmers with bamboo shoots of varied genres(species). They then sell these shoots to the farmers who grow them and when the time comes these bamboos are then sold back to Uravu for various products and construction works. It is a well balanced and self-sufficient system.

The farmers also face many difficulties in growing bamboo. One of them is the sugar content in bamboo which attracts the wildlife towards it. And Wayanad is wildlife in away. At night there are chances of wild pigs entering the fields in groups and then damaging the cultivation. The people there try to avoid facing these creatures as they might attack them when they try to stop them from doing so.

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Bhavm - The Story

Sujith is an artist born and brought up in Wayanad. He got his inspiration to enter the field of art when Mr. Azhikode visited Wayanad and conducted a workshop back in 2004. And he didn't want to restrict himself to mural paintings in a single medium. So with the cooperation of Uravu, he began his mural paintings over bamboo. Four years later he was a part of the setup of Bhavm Mural Arts. He continued his work over different mediums like clay, canvas, terracotta, bamboo etc.

Later he held a few exhibitions in Bangalore and he grabbed the attention of many. Soon he conducted workshops in both Wayanad and Bangalore. Wayanad being a tourist destination, the mural paintings grab the attention of the crowd. The bamboo mural art painting and artifacts are priced from a minimum of Rs 450 to 2000. Sujith starts work each day by nine-thirty in the mornings and continues till five in the evening. Sujith had initially procured a loan of one lakh from the Co-operative bank to set up Bhavm Mural Arts. He is assisted by ten people well trained in the craft. And the Kerala Khadi Grants Commission extends all support to this creative entrepreneur.

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Tools Used

They used acrylic colours for the painting. Conventional painting brushes are used for painting. They do not have any specifically designed equipment. Mixing or colours are done in plastic or steel cans.

Due to the technique adopted for this art, the time taken for each painting is very high. For instance, a 6ft x 4th painting would take them almost 2 months to finish. This art requires them to have a lot of patience and focus henceforth.

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The Making Process

The raw material is basically acquired from Uravu. The bamboo used to paint over is locally called as aanamula (literally converted elephant bamboo). They are the giganteus species. The bamboo is cut to the required dimensions in the machine room at Uravu and then send to Bhavm. They are then painted white so that the bright colours used do not lose their vibrancy. The basic drawing is then made over the white surface with pencils and pens.

They then use acrylic bright colours to paint the drawing. The colours used are usually very warm. Shades of red, orange and & yellow. The colours are painted with normal brushes but the unique thing about the painting is their technique. They do not use stokes. Rather they use dots to imprint the colours. By this technique, they are able to achieve very intricate details in the painting.

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Products

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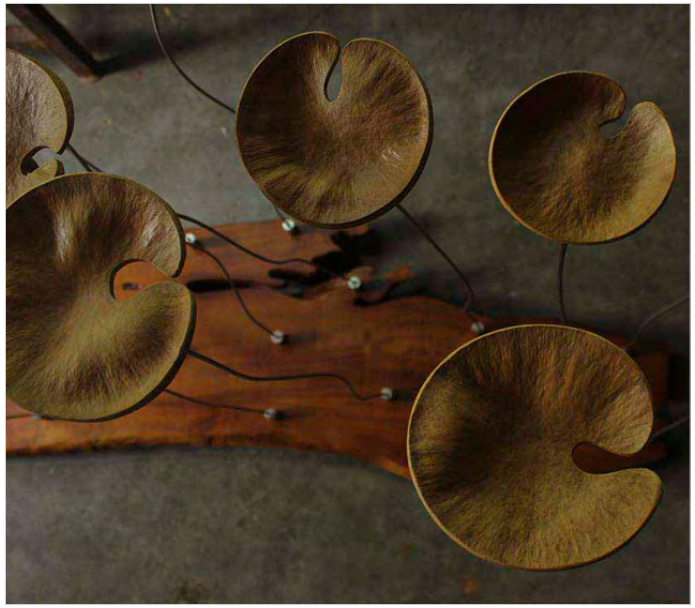

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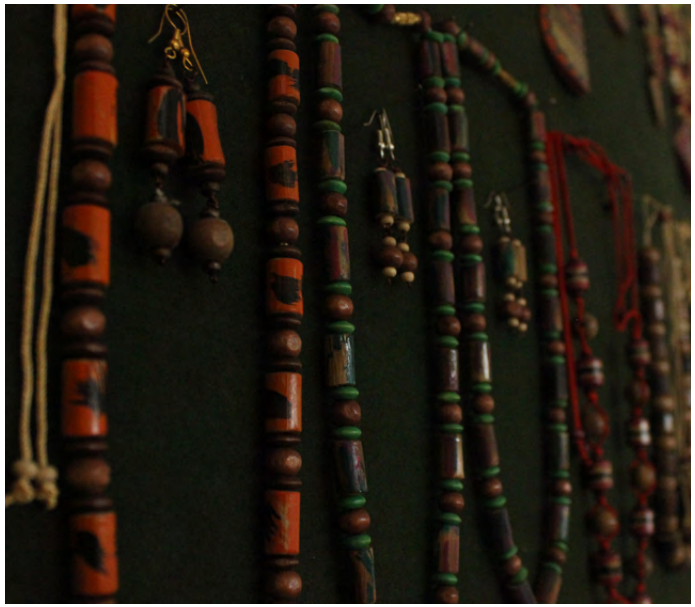

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Village and People

I haven't come across people who are so caring and optimistic about things. The village thrives through tourism and the people of the village are the ones who make that possible. There is an ambience of joy and laughter in the air all the time. Even though I come from a different place, it felt like home. The tourists who come to Thrikkaipetta can not only see places but get involved in the activities of the village and know the people better. This is a unique approach that the village has taken up to promote tourism and I feel it's incredible.

The children of the village are another crucial aspect. The future of the village lies in their hands and hence they are involved in each and every activity in the village despite their schooling and education. It's fun to spend time with the children for me because when I am with them I forget everything else seeing them smile and seeing their innocence. Sometimes the questions they ask are genuine ones which I also wouldn't have imagined.

The village is serene and beautiful. Every breath has energy in them. The change in atmosphere from the crowded roads, the busy running people, the concrete world and then finding new stories were wonderful and inspiring.

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